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AIR WAR COLLEGE

RESEARCH REPORT

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THE ROLE OF TARGETING IN COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

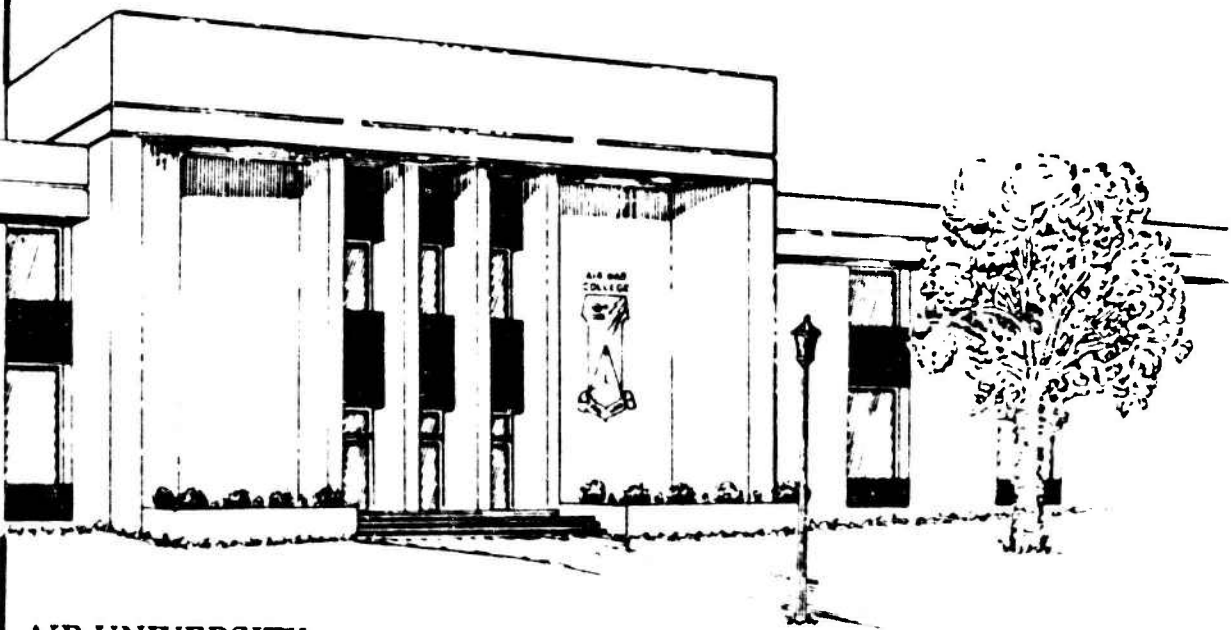**By** LT COL JOEL M. LITMAN

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THE ROLE OF TARGETING IN COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

by

Joel M. Litman

Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH

REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Doctor Stanley E. Spangler

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

May 1986

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ii

AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: The Role of Targeting in Coercive Diplomacy

AUTHOR: Joel M. Litman, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

Describes the role of targeting in coercive diplomacy by highlighting its similarities and differences with warfare targeting, proposing initial guidelines for target selection, and identifying limitations. Clearly explained are the distinctions between coercive diplomacy and war as different but related instruments of national policy. Three recommendations for enhancing targeting support to coercive diplomacy are offered.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Joel Marshall Litman (B.A., Michigan State University and M.A., University of Oklahoma) has been involved in targeting since 1969 and has been a Target Intelligence Officer (Targeteer) since 1972, serving in this capacity at the headquarters for Strategic Air Command, Air Force Intelligence Service and Air Staff, United States European Command, and Allied Forces Central Europe. He has written Air Force Pamphlet 200-17, An Introduction to Air Force Targeting, Air Force Pamphlet 200-18, USAF Intelligence Targeting Handbook, and the Central Region Targeting Primer, the latter while assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He is a distinguished graduate of both Squadron Officers School, class 1972-B and Air Command and Staff College, class 1979, where his study, Counter-Blitzkrieg Targeting, received a special research award for excellence. Lieutenant Colonel Litman completed the National Defense University, National Security Management Course by correspondence in 1983. He is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1986.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

vi

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The requirement, character, and efficacy of targeting in preparation for or during war are well recognized and documented. Less understood are the contributions, utility, and limitations of targeting as a part of coercive diplomacy. The purpose of this paper is to describe the role of targeting in coercive diplomacy, highlight its similarities and differences with warfare targeting, propose initial guidelines for target selection, identify limitations, and make recommendations to enhance this least understood but crucial role of targeting. This work should be beneficial to those desiring to understand coercive diplomacy and to cope with diplomatic circumstances where limited force, short of warfare, appears necessary and propitious.

Limitations

This paper is not, nor was it intended to be, the definitive work on the role or use of targeting in coercive diplomacy. It is a conceptual beginning point not the end. In keeping with the intent and focus of this paper, the targeting process will only be discussed in the broadest terms; the specific details of each step in the process are included in this author's publications that are listed in the biography and in the list of references. This paper is not a set of rules to be routinely or mechanically applied

1

regardless of the adversary, situation, time-frame, or political objectives being pursued. Finally, this paper will not judge the propriety of political objectives and motives.

Frame of Reference

To describe the role of targeting in coercive diplomacy and highlight its similarities and differences, it is first necessary to describe and relate the concepts of targeting, war, and coercive diplomacy.

What is Targeting?

A recently proposed by Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe for inclusion in Allied Administrative Publication (AAP)-6(1), "targeting is the process of selecting targets and matching these targets with operational capabilities to support the commander's guidance as stated in his concept of operations." (2:2-1) Targeting is concerned with inputs, but it is far more concerned with outcomes or results. Targeting may be tactical or strategic, in nature, based upon its relevance to the battle. Tactical targeting has direct relevance to a particular battle; strategic targeting has relevance to a campaign or the entire war. (3:v) Targeting has many purposes, including attrition of enemy forces and capabilities, reprisal or retaliation, attacking the enemy's plan and timetable, sending a signal, inhibiting reconstitution of the enemy, and so forth. The term target has a variety of meanings and definitions. According to Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)

2

Publication 1 (and AAP-6), "a target is a geographic area, complex, or installation planned for capture or destruction by military forces." (4:364) Targets may be military, economic, geographic, political, or psychological. Civilians, civilian objects, and civilian facilities are not legitimate targets.

Targets are analyzed and nominated or rejected through "target development" as part of the targeting process portrayed in Figure 1. Through target development, target systems and the component installations and sites (that comprise the systems) are systematically identified and evaluated to determine against which critical and vulnerable facilities military action should be directed to achieve the specified tactical or strategic objective. Target nomination, which includes the weaponeering function (discussed in Chapter III) and the target development function, is the second step in the targeting process. (2:2-1) Determining which targets to attack and attacking those targets, through the targeting process, is one of the key functions in war.

What is War?

According to Carl Von Clausewitz's eternal observation, "war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means." (5:605) The "other means" are organized violence or force. War may be a limited or a total engagement of societies.

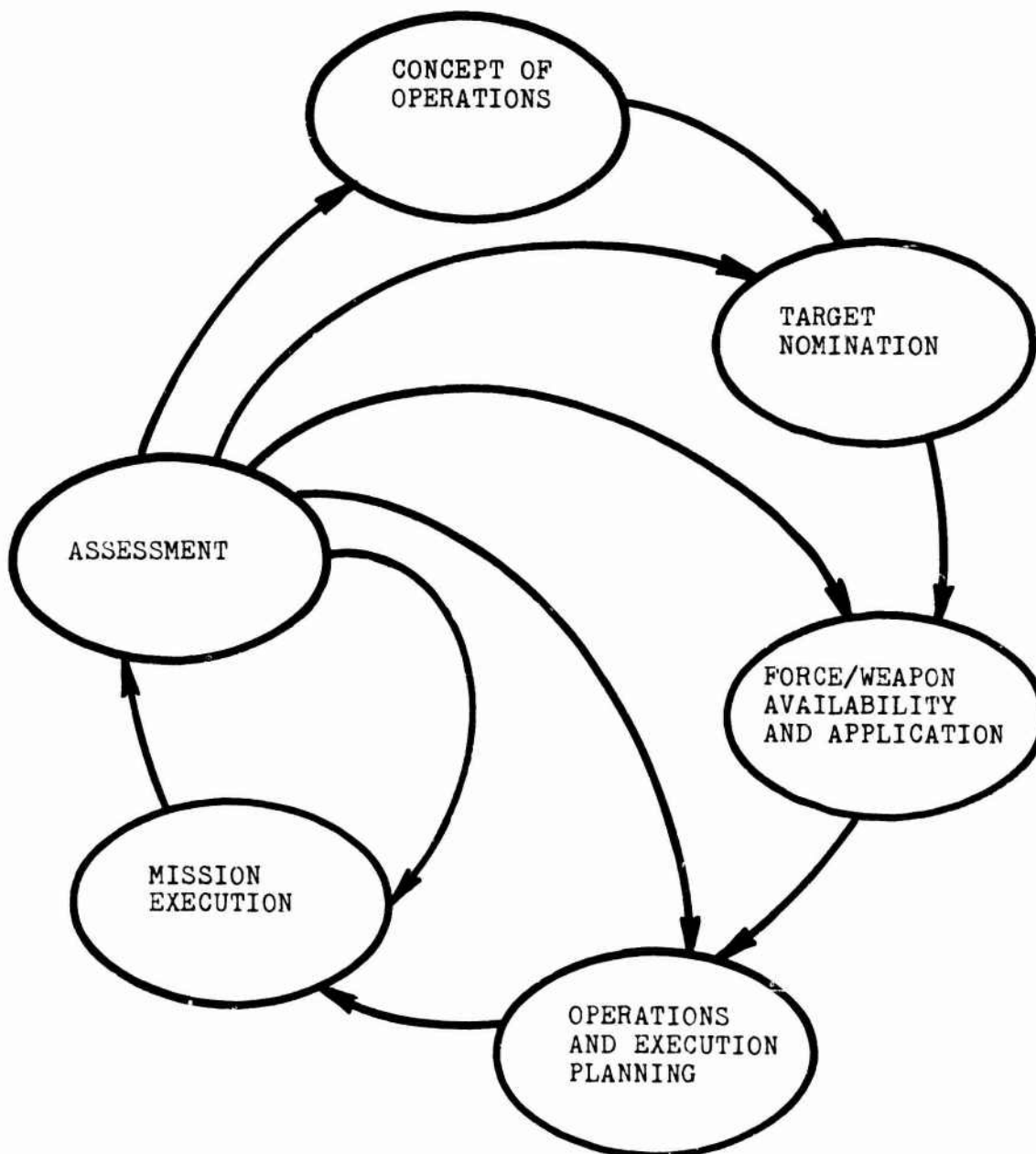FIGURE 1: The Generic Targeting Process. It is, . . .
a logical sequence of interdependent
planning functions (occurring at all levels
of command) that result in plans/operations
with the highest probability of success. The
targeting process can theoretically be broken
into a progression of functional steps. In
reality, many of these steps are performed
at the same time, thereby blurring their
distinction. (4:2-1)

4

Whe the use of force is labeled "war" there are various
legal results with regard to belligerent, non-belliger-
ent, and neutral rights. In 1949, the parties to the
Red Cross Conventions in Geneva agreed that it was de-
sirable that some legal results flow from "armed con-
flicts," regardless of whether or not there was a
(formally declared state of) "war." As a result, "war"
has lost its utility as a legal label and is now declared
only for technical or political reasons, and then very
rarely. The use of force continues, but it is no longer
governed by precise labels and concepts of belligerency.
(6:135)

Not all organized use of force or every use of armed forces

by a nation-state is considered "war" or armed conflict;

also, armed forces do not always have to be used to be effec-

tive. Some uses or threatened uses of armed forces fall

short of war, into an area of diplomatic relations termed

coercive diplomacy. Carl Von Clausewitz would probably

categorize coercive diplomacy as a form of warfare to exact

limited concessions from the enemy. (5:28)

What is Coercive Diplomacy?

To paraphrase Carl Von Clausewitz's observation, coercive

diplomacy is simply a continuation of traditional diplomatic

intercourse with the addition of other means. The other

means include threats of violence or actual use of violence.

Coercive diplomacy is not a new concept; Sun Tzu first

advanced the idea when he wrote, "to subdue the enemy

without fighting is the acme of skill." (6:77) Coercive

diplomacy has many definitions. In Force Without War, Barry

Blechman and Stephen Kaplan offer a very broad definition of

coercive diplomacy; they define it as,

> a political use of the armed forces (that) occurs when
> physical actions are taken by one or more components
> of the uniformed military services as part of a
> deliberate attempt by the national authorities to
> influence, or to be prepared to influence, specific
> behavior of individuals in another nation without
> engaging in a continuing contest of violence. (7:12)

While in many respects this is a satisfactory definition, Barry

Blechman and Stephen Kaplan do not distinguish between coercive

diplomacy and deterrence, and there is a difference. Deterrence

rests on threats to convince an enemy not to undertake an action

that he has not yet initiated. (8:189) As this author wrote in

Air Force Pamphlet 200-17,

> Deterrence is a state of mind that depends both on the
> existence and appearance of power, as well as the
> enemy's perception of that power. The enemy must be
> convinced that such power is real, that there is the will
> and resolve to use it against him, and that it will be
> effectively applied. (9:2-1)

On the other hand, coercive diplomacy uses threats, force,

and inducements to influence the perception and will of the

adversary, thereby persuading him to undo something that he

has done or to stop him from doing something he has already

begun. (7:13) Further, coercive diplomacy may be offensive or

defensive, in nature, rather than only defensive, as is deter-

rence. Because of these distinctions, this author prefers to

use the more specific of the two definitions of coercive

diplomacy, and will therefore, not consider deterrence part

of coercive diplomacy.

Like war or traditional diplomacy, coercive diplomacy is

not an autonomous action; it is an instrument of policy, and

policy will determine its character. (5:605 and 606)
Coercive diplomacy may preclude war and normally precedes
war; it lies between and overlaps the traditional art of
diplomatic bargaining and diplomacy conducted through armed
forces fighting battles. (5:607) (Refer to Figure 2.)

Coercive diplomacy seeks to modify behavior or change
activity through inducement, compellance, or a combination of
both. Coercive diplomacy is ideally based upon a combined
"carrot" and "stick" approach to the adversary. Communicating
the promise of an inducement or benefit that the adversary
wants or needs, combined with a reasonable and credible threat
of penalty (or cost), is often the key to effective coercive
diplomacy. Emphasis on only the inducement or only the threat
has proven to be less successful. Additionally, the induce-
ment ideally must not be perceived as a form of "appeasement,"
by either party, allies, or the outside world. Nonetheless,
the benefit should adequately balance the threat.

Threatened actions must be achievable and be perceived to
be achievable if the threat is to be credible. Targeting the
adversary is one of the "stick" options. However, the promise
not to target the adversary may also be an effective induce-
ment. The application of force, through targeting, is one of
the extreme means of conducting coercive diplomacy. "To
impose our will on the enemy is its objective." (5:75)

Coercive diplomacy, unlike traditional diplomacy, is
usually most effective when conducted in public rather than

7
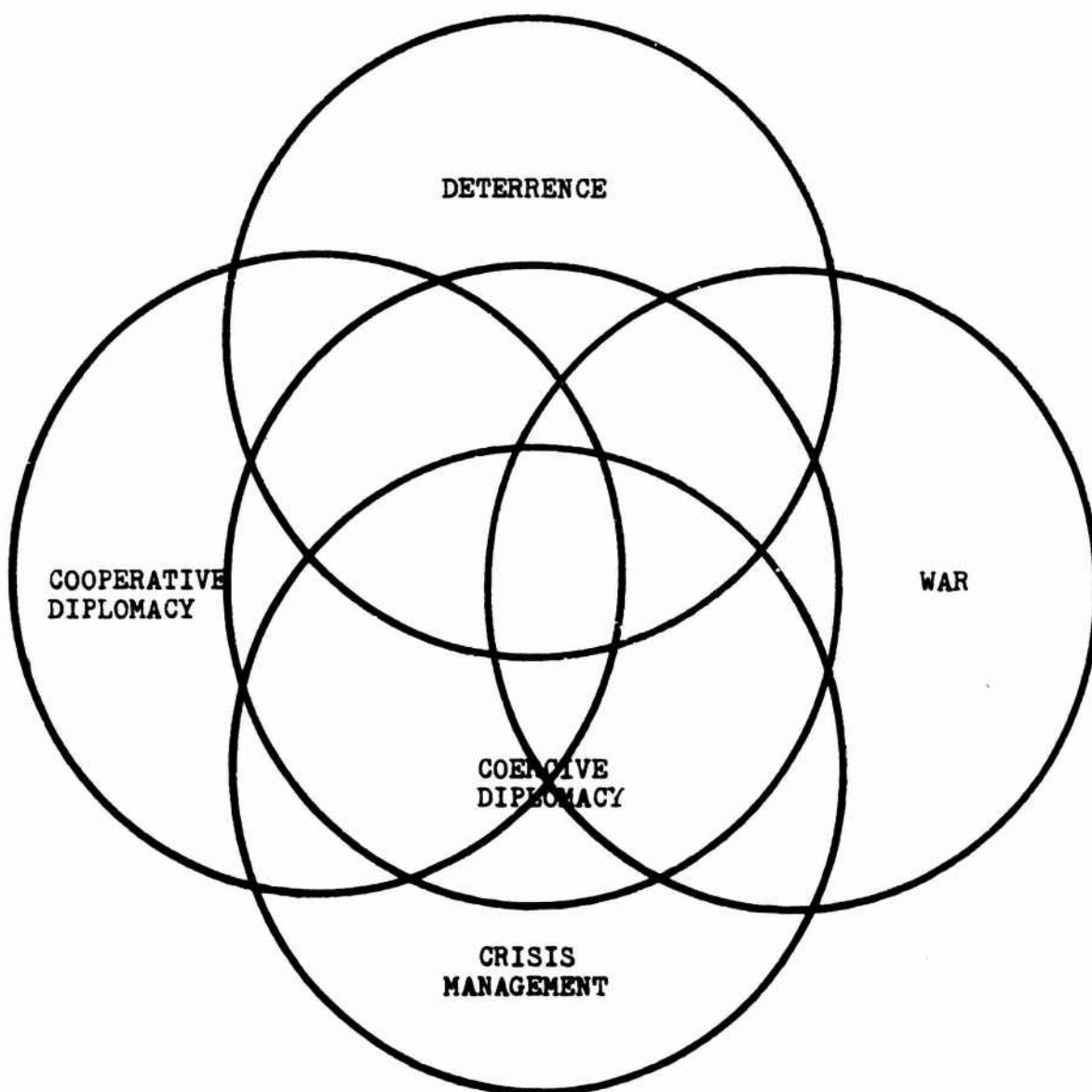
FIGURE 2: Set Theory Portrayal of Nation-State Political Influence-Power-Action Relations. Unlike the traditional portrayal of peace, crisis, and war, the above portrayal reflects the realistic overlap between the five components. Cooperative and coercive diplomacy do not end when war begins; the same is true for deterrence and crisis management. Even with the overlap of significant portions of the five components, there remains four exclusive areas of non-overlap. Only coercive diplomacy is consumed by overlap. All five components are instruments of policy.

8

in private. However, it is possible, under some circumstances, to keep threats or inducements private if it is in the interest of both parties to do so, but it is obviously extremely difficult to keep overt acts of violence against another state private, particularly in the modern world of communications. As a rule, it is not necessary, and it usually is not desirable. In the United States, attempting to conceal such actions would likely be viewed as a "cover-up," and the attempted secrecy would probably "backfire" on the political authority responsible. On the other hand, conducting coercive diplomacy openly could be interpreted by the adversary as reflecting greater commitment and strength of will. The public use of power requires the political authorities to have "thick skins" as well as courage. Likewise, the private use of coercive diplomacy could be interpreted by the adversary as a reflection of less commitment and strength of will, as well as a possible indication of weak domestic political support.

Coercive diplomacy offers the political authority options for achieving important, time-sensitive policy objectives without automatically or precipitantly resorting to declared or undeclared warfare. Coercive diplomacy often affords the statesman the opportunity to achieve goals at a lower cost and lower level of risk than open warfare while retaining the option to escalate the intensity of actions in the future if the political objectives cannot be achieved at the lower level of intensity. It should be obvious, however, that

because of its nature coercive diplomacy carries greater risks.

Incidents involving the use of the military, short of open warfare, are frequent; Barry Blechman and Stephen Kaplan documented 215 instances of United States practice between January 1946 and December 1975. (7:547-553) Stephen Kaplan also identified 190 instances where the Soviets used military force, short of war, between June 1944 and February 1979. (10:689-693) Philip Zelikow identified 44 additional cases where the United States used military force, short of war, between May 1975 and December 1982. (11:31-33) However, only a handful of these 449 documented instances involved overt offensive targeting operations.

Two additional observations about these 449 instances are warranted. First, in these documented uses, military forces were directed against other nation-states. Second, in all the documented instances where military forces were used by the United States and the Soviet Union since World War II, use of military forces, in circumstances short of warfare, was far more successful in achieving short-term positive results rather than favorable long-term outcomes.

Coercive diplomacy is not usually appropriate for use against non-state or sub-state actors, such as terrorists; coercive diplomacy may be used against nation-states using, supporting, or protecting terrorists, but failing this, organized force used against terrorists is taken to supplement

10

inadequate nation-state action rather than to change terrorist activity or behavior, though it may also have that affect. (12:140) Coercive diplomacy, as with war, is not appropriate for every situation.

It is important to recognize when an opportunity exists to use coercive diplomacy and when it does not; certain world actors and circumstances (events and actions at a particular time) cannot be influenced using coercive diplomacy, and trying to do so will be unproductive and possibly detrimental to the interests of the United States. Pragmatic leaders, with secure power bases, may be influenced; extremist religious, ideologically-driven, or politically desperate leaders are less easily influenced, particularly by force or threat of force.

As an instrument of national policy, coercive diplomacy seems most useful in relations between nation-states when there is a disparity in the elements of power and asymmetric motivation and interests, during a specific situation. Coercive diplomacy would appear to be generally less appropriate in relations between alliances of equals, for a single nation-state to influence an alliance, or for a weaker nation-state to influence a stronger (unless the weaker state is part of an alliance). Coercive diplomacy is less often necessary or useful between allies. However, alliance support often does serve to legitimize national coercive diplomatic actions

11

and is therefore useful since alliances cannot be ignored or slighted. Consultation with allies is, therefore, extremely important in using coercive diplomacy successfully against another nation-state.

CHAPTER II

SIMILARITIES IN COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AND WARFARE TARGETING

Targeting in support of coercive diplomacy is similar in many ways to targeting in preparation for or during war. First, in targeting support for coercive diplomacy and warfare targeting, there should be a close and direct alignment between the political ends to be achieved and the means to be used.

Second, there are constraints or limitations imposed on both coercive diplomacy and warfare targeting, such as rules of engagement and the laws of armed conflict. Targeting must not violate the prohibitions of the laws of armed conflict even though coercive diplomacy technically falls short of war. Regardless of what it is called, most nation-states involved in armed conflict since 1949 have acted in accordance with the traditional laws of warfare. (13) Both basic principles and specific precautions must be complied with. The legal principles of military necessity and proportionality specifically apply. The objective is to avoid unnecessary suffering and cause the least danger and damage to civilians and civilian objects while accomplishing the purpose of the attack.

> Military necessity protects the right to use any degree or means of force, not forbidden, necessary to achieve the objective sought. ...The principle of proportionality is a well recognized legal limitation on weapons or methods of warfare which requires that injury or

13

damage to legally protected interests must not be disproportionate to the legitimate military advantages secured by the weapons. (14:6-1 and 6-2)

Third, the sequence and steps in the targeting process, as illustrated in Figure 1, are the same for supporting coercive diplomacy or warfare.

Fourth, timing is critical in all targeting. Target value, significance, and impact vary over time. The right target attacked at the wrong time will accomplish little and may cost a great deal.

Fifth, in both coercive diplomacy and in warfare, the adversary will not remain neutral or uninvolved in the action. The adversary is not only acted upon, but he will act to negate or mitigate the actions against him. The adversary's response must always be anticipated and countered.

Sixth, in coercive diplomacy and in warfare, attrition of friendly forces is eliminated or reduced by careful planning, protection, and execution of the attack mission. The highest probability of arrival of the attacking force at the target is the planning goal. Weapon systems that do not reach the target cannot be used and cannot return for re-use. Economy of force is a necessary principle of war and coercive diplomacy.

Finally, neither war or coercive diplomacy should be viewed as a mathematical formula; adding up all the tactical victories and subtracting all the tactical defeats will not

equate to a successful or unsuccessful outcome. All
the military battles may be won but the political war
lost, witness the outcome in the Vietnam conflict.

CHAPTER III

DIFFERENCES IN COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AND WARFARE TARGETING

Targeting in support of coercive diplomacy differs from warfare targeting in many ways. First, targeting is useful only in a small number of instances of coercive diplomacy while it is a natural element of all warfare.

Second, while the sequence and steps in the targeting process (illustrated in Figure 1) are the same for coercive diplomacy and warfare, these steps are performed under the JCS Crisis Action System during times when coercive diplomacy is being applied; this is not the case for warfare targeting. The Crisis Action System facilitates development of military responses during time-constrained operations. The Crisis Action System includes the six phases illustrated in Figure 3. Targeting is involved in phases II through VI of the Crisis Action System.

Third, in nearly all circumstances, the objective of coercive diplomacy will be limited and the impact of the action must be immediate. However, warfare targeting is frequently less limited in objectives and may have as a goal long-term impact upon the adversary instead of or as well as an objective of achieving immediate impact. (This is one of the fundamental questions of targeting; if it goes unasked or is answered without due consideration, target selection will not support the objective.)
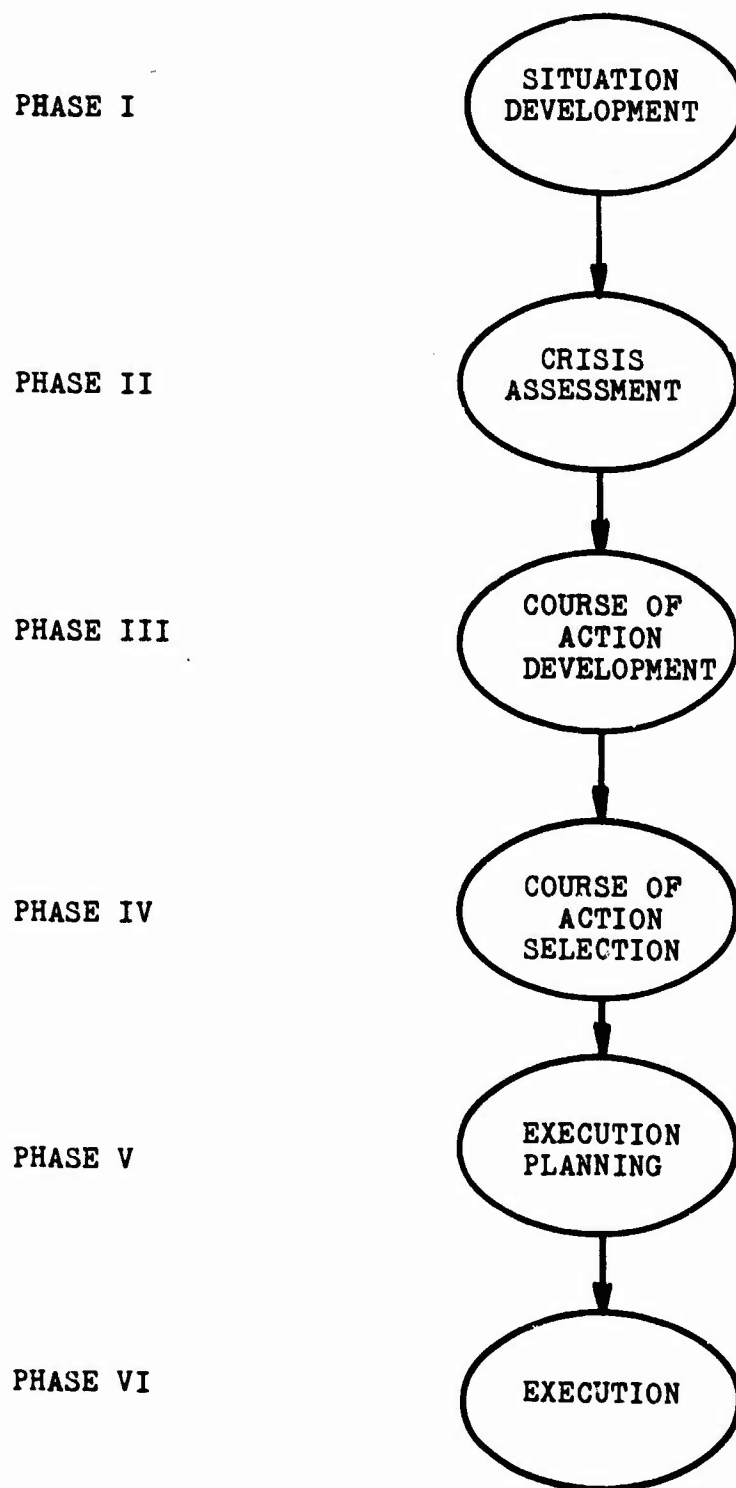
Figure 3: The Crisis Action System.

In a fourth distinction, the objective of coercive diplomacy is to clearly (and on occasion strongly) signal vital or survival interests, intent, and will to insist on a favorable outcome, at whatever level of intensity (or spectrum of force) is necessary; the primary objective is not to destroy, damage, or neutralize targets per se, though this may be a necessary element of a strong signal to the opponent. While signaling has an essential role in coercive diplomacy, it is less common or useful in warfare targeting; diplomatic signaling through target selection can have a role in limited warfare, but the signal must be clear to the adversary.

Fifth, targeting in support of coercive diplomacy will carry a heavier psychological component since it must test the will-power, commitment, and tenacity of the adversary leader and people rather than test the military or industrial capabilities of the adversary state. Though warfare targeting also involves attacking the will of the adversary, unlike coercive diplomacy, it more often has the objective of reducing or neutralizing the armed forces or economy of the enemy state as the vehicle for attacking their determination and means to continue waging war.

Sixth, the necessity for a high degree of certainty in the weaponeering solution is greater in coercive diplomacy than in warfare targeting. "Weaponeering is the process of estimating the quantity of specific types of munitions, fuzing, and delivery vehicles required to achieve a

18

predetermined level of damage to a specific target or type of target." (2:7-1) Weaponeering is the mathematics of targeting; it is based on probability theory. Weaponeering is not separate from targeting; it is part of target analysis and nomination. (Refer to Figure 1.) In coercive diplomacy, missing the target or inflicting little damage will send the wrong message to the adversary, particularly if some civilian facility or object is harmed as well. Such action will not only reinforce the will of the adversary leader, it will reflect adversely on our ability to insist the adversary do or not do something. A lesser degree of certainty or a lower probability of damage is acceptable to plan for during war. Though an unpleasant circumstance, even missing a target during a war is not normally a tragedy; the target can be reattacked until the necessary level of damage is achieved. The requirement for a high probability of arrival and a successful attack increases the number of attack resources required; this may exceed what is politically desirable in coercive diplomacy. For example, it might be optimal for a single aircraft to successfully attack a target and return unharmed. However, what if 24 aircraft were required to achieve a 99 percent probability of damage against a particular target? This could be too large a force, politically. Furthermore, what if the adversary's defensive capability is good enough to necessitate sending 27 aircraft to ensure 24 arrive?

19

The probability of arrival is as important as the probability of damage.

Seventh, the number and character of the targets to be attacked will differ for coercive diplomacy and warfare targeting. In coercive diplomacy, the premium will be on one or several targets rather than the almost unlimited number and type of targets that may be attacked during a war; therefore, each target must carry a higher significance or value toward achieving the objective of the coercive diplomacy.

Eighth, targeting in support of coercive diplomacy must always be strategic in nature; that is, all target selection must be directly relevant to achieving the overall conclusive result that is the focus of the political objective. There should be no targeting incidental to the central focus of the political objective. Even defense supression must be minimized. However, winning skirmishes or tactical victories is worthwhile, if they do not waste time or divert attention and resources from the central political focus; certainly, there is no advantage in losing a skirmish. On the other hand, warfare targeting may serve either tactical, strategic, or some combination of the two types of objectives. Wars are no longer won by a single decisive battle; yet a single targeting action may lead to a successful outcome through coercive diplomacy.

Ninth, targeting in support of coercive diplomacy will
usually occur over a short time-span, possibly allowing only
a single iteration of the targeting process. Warfare target-
ing may be conducted over an unlimited time-span, short, long,
or somewhere in between.

Tenth, it is important to limit the punishment inflicted
as a signal. Therefore, targeting in support of coercive
diplomacy should be limited to attacking the adversary's
"present" not is "future" while warfare targeting generally
considers attacking targets with either current or future
value. To attack targets that will have a limited impact on
the adversary's future is a significant constraint, but it
reasonably limits the punishment inflicted as a signal. To
attack a target that will hurt the adversary for years to come
may be too severe a signal and punishment and may make it
impossible to achieve the nation's political objective without
escalating to warfare.

Finally, it is more difficult to prepare ahead-of-time
for targeting in support of coercive diplomacy than for
warfare since targets for coercive diplomacy are far more
political, psychological, and situation-specific.

CHAPTER IV

GUIDELINES FOR COERCIVE DIPLOMACY TARGETING

Whatever coercive action is threatened, must be accomplishable and be perceived by the target state's leader to be accomplishable at affordable costs, if the threat is to be credible. Unsupportable threats will do more harm than good.

There is a role for a "show-of-force" or "demonstration-of-resolve" or "symbolic targeting," but attacking an inconsequential target, such as a test range (even successfully), may send the wrong message or be misconstrued. Such targeting demonstrates that our resolve to prevail is weak since our deeds or our capabilities do not match our strong words. Such a weak signal will likely be ignored or be exploited by our adversary. A tactically successful mission against an inconsequential target may result in failure strategically. On the other hand, attacking extremely high value targets may be too high a penalty to use as a signal; such attacks may harden the adversary's determination to resist our "diplomatic" efforts, thereby forcing us to back-down or to escalate our actions up to and including warfare. Targeting should be limited to attacking the adversary's "present" not his "future." It is wise to remember that adversity unifies as well as divides people. The aerial bombing of North Vietnam offers an

22

excellent example of strength derived by a society from adversity.

Attacking a target as a signal must be matched by parallel efforts to clearly explain to the adversary our intent and will to persist, the intensity of our interest, the continued cost if he does not modify his activity, and perhaps an offer of an inducement if he does modify his activity. What is said about the targeting option before and after mission execution is at least as important as selecting the proper targets and effectively executing the mission against those targets. Again, the Vietnam conflict offers an excellent example of what happens when targets are attacked as a signal without explaining the signal. The "targeting signal" sent by the United States during operation "Rolling Thunder" was interpreted differently by the North Vietnamese than it was intended by the United States. The clarity and intensity of the signal was lost, and a potential turning point was passed.

Target selection for signaling must avoid "mirror imaging." Instead, we must consider what the adversary's societal perception of the signal will be and what it will not be. We should not automatically assume our adversary's rationality and our own will be identical.

Attacking targets should usually be preceded by an ultimatum or a warning with a time limit invoked for the adversary's response. An ultimatum is directed towards leaders; the warning is directed towards the civilian

population in the target area. An ultimatum may, in fact, make it unnecessary to use the threatened force, but threats that are not enforceable will be self-defeating. The warning should be issued if targets are to be attacked and there is risk of substantial civilian casualties, even if some tactical surprise is sacrificed. However, under certain circumstances, it may be necessary and beneficial to attack an adversary first and later explain why the attack was undertaken and what the consequences will be if the adversary's activity is not modified in the future. Such action, if conducted swiftly prevents coalescence of national, alliance, or world opinion before the attack can be undertaken. Swift, unannounced actions maximize strategic and tactical surprise which increases the likelihood of mission success while minimizing the likelihood of attrition. In either case, care should be exercised not to inflict punishment on the population of the adversary nation-state; precise target attack is desirable, necessary, and feasible.

Target selection must comply with the tenets of the international law of armed warfare. This is important not only for legal and moral reasons but also from a domestic and world-wide public opinion perspective. Achieving tactical success by destroying a target is meaningless if strategic victory is lost because of collateral damage or civilian casualties. Target selection and attack should not make the future "peace" more difficult. Success in

diplomacy or warfare is never an end, it is always a means
to a greater goal.

What you do not target is as important as what you do
target. Avoid hospitals, schools, religious buildings and
sites, cultural properties, historical monuments, prisoner
of war and internment camps, and all targets with such
facilities or related vehicles in close proximity.
Collateral damage must be minimized.

Target selection and attacks must avoid involving third
party governments, properties, objects, and people, unless
they are the objective or are directly associated with
the objective.

Target selection must be directly linked to the specific
political objective of the action. Actions must always be
consistent with immediate and long-term interests. Ef-
fective targeting requires clear, consistent, rational, and
attainable objectives. If the objective is not adequately
defined, or is not accomplishable, the political decision-
maker must be so advised, and the objective must be altered,
or the decision-maker must accept the fact that the desired
objective will not be fully achieved. An irrational objec-
tive will not be supported by the public, media, or opposition
politicians; an irrational objective may serve to unify the
adversary nation and strengthen international support for it,
particularly if it happens to be a small Third World country.

Targeting must consider whether the target should be "public" or "private". Public targets are those visible to the population as a whole, and their attack cannot be hidden or denied; private targets are those that by their nature or location are or may be concealed from the media and general public while being very visible to the leaders of the target state. Attacking private targets may be misinterpreted as reflecting a lack of resolve on the part of the attacker, though this is not always true.

Target selection must maximize the probability of arrival and probability of damage for the attacking force to achieve the highest likelihood of mission success. If the target cannot be successfully attacked or if a large portion of the attacking force is destroyed or turned back, the threat may be perceived as hollow, and the cost of resistance may be perceived as an acceptable price to pay. In such a case, the attempt to use coercive diplomacy will likely fail. Escalation threats may also not be viewed as credible by the adversary because of an unsuccessful or partially successful attack mission. Also, an unsuccessful mission can be used for great propaganda effect by the adversary. (It is important to carefully explain to the political decision-maker what the prospects of success or failure are to ensure there is no confusion over the likely results of the attack mission and the attrition cost. A range of options should be presented to the decision-maker rather than a single best solution.)

26

Care must be exercised in determining which weapon
system will be used, not only because of the necessity of
achieving the highest likelihood of success and the lowest
attrition of friendly forces, but also because various weapon
systems have different psychological connotations. For
example, the significance of using a B-52 bomber is distinc-
tively different than using other aircraft or a ship offshore;
because of its nuclear role, the B-52 is always perceived
differently. A trade-off between high probability of arrival
and damage and the psychological connotation of the proposed
weapon systems will sometimes be a consideration. It is
essential to avoid having tactical success result in stra-
tegic defeat because the wrong attack system was used.

Target selection for signaling purposes must anticipate
and prepare to deal with the reaction of the media, the
American public, allies, the Soviet Union, international
forums, and world opinion. Ignoring the media and public
opinion is courting certain disaster; strategic success can
be denied by an angry media or by adverse public reaction
to the tactical success.

Target selection must consider other political, psycho-
social, and economic actions being used to influence the
adversary so that the military effort integrates into the
overall strategy to achieve maximum impact rather than being
an isolated action. Targeting signals must be consistent

27

with all other signals or their impact may be lost on the
adversary or they may overwhelm the other signals being sent.

Target selection should not be based on historical
examples that appear similar. Circumstances rarely repeat
themselves exactly, and solutions that were once politically
or militarily sound may no longer be appropriate. Even using
a previously successful strategy may limit your success since
the adversary may be prepared to counter it this time.

CHAPTER V

LIMITATIONS ON TARGETING IN SUPPORT OF
COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

It is particularly difficult to develop targets in
support of coercive diplomacy. Once military force is
used, its leverage as a further threat is reduced, particu-
larly if it is unsuccessful or has limited success.

Military action, relatively speaking, is an easy solu-
tion to execute. Consequently, it may not be integrated with
other elements of strategy, such as political, economic, and
psycho-social actions.

United States military action, in support of coercive
diplomacy, will frequently be viewed by other countries, even
friendly ones, as a direct defiance of international and
moral law. Public coercive diplomacy will not likely win
many friends, even if it is successful. Offensive action may
not be forgotten or forgiven, and people have long memories.
It is difficult to remain dispassionate as either an attacker
or target state. Emotions do not always respond to rational
pleas for control. Targeting stands an excellent chance of
having an adverse long-term impact, even if it has a positive
short-term outcome.

Sending signals through target selection is difficult,
at best; this was tried in Vietnam, and it failed. Without
a verbal message, the signal will likely confuse rather

29

than clarify the situation. A verbal signal should accompany any nonverbal signal if there is any substantial possibility that the nonverbal signal may be misread.

It may not be possible to avoid competition in risk-taking with the adversary. The adversary will act to mitigate the effects of our actions against him. Any response by the adversary, other than yielding to our will, requires repetition or escalation of our threats (and inducements) or abandoning of our objectives. This suggests a rule of thumb: if you do not think you can stick with the planned course of action through to completion, then you should consider not pursuing that course at all.

The appropriateness of target selection is directly linked to the political guidance provided. If the objective is not specific, is confusing, or is inconsistent, the targeting will reflect this. The Vietnam conflict is a perfect example of the confusion that results from inadequate definition of objectives. Defining the objective is the first and most important action, yet this step is often skipped over, delegated downward, or accomplished too routinely.

Unintended consequences will often result from offensive operations related to coercive diplomacy. The fog and friction of war are applicable here as well as in standard warfare. These may affect the short-term solution desired or the situation over the long-term. Expect the unexpected.

The effectiveness of the targeting is directly related
to the quality and the currency of intelligence available
on the adversary country. Since coercive diplomacy will
most often take place in the Third World (where the
intelligence data base is less comprehensive and current),
and since the character of the targets may differ from
those generally considered for warfare targeting, the data
base will likely be a limitation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Though acts of force to compel an adversary to follow
our will are traditionally thought of as part of warfare, the
use of force to influence an adversary may also fall within
the boundaries of coercive diplomacy. The categorization of
an act of violence as warfare or coercive diplomacy is a
matter of degree, of intent, of perception, and of relations
between the involved parties. Targeting serves as a common
vehicle bridging this extreme form of diplomatic intimidation
and warfare. Effective target selection and mission execu-
tion may be able to satisfy our political objectives without
the nation resorting to declared or undeclared warfare. On
the other hand, targeting intended to send signals can rapidly
transition into traditional warfare targeting.

Targeting in support of coercive diplomacy is simple in
concept but difficult in execution; the process is not
scientific. There is no immutable law. There is no univer-
sal Achille's heel that should always be attacked. Targeting
the adversary must clearly be recognized as part of a short-
term solution; the impact, favorable or otherwise, will be
immediate but the unintended consequences and long-term
results (so clear in historical perspective) will not be
calculable or preventable.

32

While use of coercive diplomacy is reasonably common, signaling through target selection and attack is relatively rare. When targeting options are considered, the situation is generally quite serious and time-sensitive. Those involved in targeting must be ready and able to perform their functions, or this potential real option will become a hollow threat, dooming the operation and foreign policy objective to failure before execution.

Recommendations

Targeting in support of coercive diplomacy should be accomplished at the highest level of targeting capability with immediate access to the political authorities. The Defense Intelligence Agency is probably the best located and hierarchially positioned to perform this function. Targeting should be accomplished by a team including several target intelligence officers, a threat assessor, a penetration analyst, a political-military affairs officer, a legal advisor (familiar with the international laws of armed conflict), an unconventional warfare officer, and operations officers (knowledgeable about the primary weapon systems being considered). Advanced designation of this role, personnel, chairman, and meeting location is necessary.

The guidelines for targeting in support of coercive diplomacy, should be refined and included in the Air Force Intelligency Functional Doctrine (16), Air Force Targeting Regulation (17), An Introduction to Air Force Targeting (9),

33

The United States Air Force Intelligence Targeting Handbook
(18), and the Intelligence Targeting Officer Course
(G30L8081).

The Automated Installation Intelligence File data base
that supports targeting should be evaluated from the per-
spective of supporting coercive diplomacy targeting.
Structural changes and addition of substantive intelligence
should be considered.

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35

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